

Saturday, May 9, 2020

Turn off the outside “noise” for a couple of minutes and consider this message from God’s Word.  
I am praying that it calms your spirit and encourages your heart.

JOHN 16:16-28 (NIV)

<sup>16</sup> Jesus went on to say, **“In a little while you will see me no more,** and then after a little while you will see me.”

<sup>17</sup> At this, some of his disciples said to one another, “What does he mean by saying, **‘In a little while you will see me no more,** and then after a little while you will see me,’ and **‘Because I am going to the Father?’**” <sup>18</sup> They kept asking, “What does he mean by ‘a little while’? We don’t understand what he is saying.”

<sup>19</sup> Jesus saw that they wanted to ask him about this, so he said to them, “Are you asking one another what I meant when I said, **‘In a little while you will see me no more,** and then after a little while you will see me’? <sup>20</sup> **Very truly I tell you, you will weep and mourn while the world rejoices. You will grieve, but your grief will turn to joy.**” <sup>21</sup> A woman giving birth to a child has pain because her time has come; but when her baby is born she forgets the anguish because of her joy that a child is born into the world. <sup>22</sup> So with you: **Now is your time of grief, but I will see you again and you will rejoice, and no one will take away your joy.**

<sup>23</sup> In that day you will no longer ask **ME** anything. Very truly I tell you, **MY FATHER will give you whatever you ask IN MY NAME.** <sup>24</sup> Until now you have not asked for anything **IN MY NAME. Ask and you will receive, and your joy will be complete.**

<sup>25</sup> “Though I have been speaking figuratively, a time is coming when I will no longer use this kind of language but will tell you plainly about my Father. <sup>26</sup> **In that day YOU will ask IN MY NAME. I am not saying that I will ask the Father on your behalf.**” <sup>27</sup> **No, THE FATHER HIMSELF LOVES YOU because you have loved me and have believed that I came from God.** <sup>28</sup> I came from the Father and entered the world; now I am leaving the world and going back to the Father.”

— PART 3 —

*I found that when a passage of Scripture has been very familiar to me for a long time — such as this passage! — if I will simply **slow down** . . . take my time . . . and read thoughtfully and reflectively, it can become alive to me in new and fresh ways.*

We have been reflecting over the past two days (three days if you include the day I forgot to get my daily “Encouragement” uploaded! — *just seeing if you are paying attention!*) — on Jesus’ awareness that being **“alone”** may not mean we’re **“lonely”**:

JOHN 16:32 (NIV)  
**“YOU will leave me all alone.  
Yet I am not alone,  
for MY FATHER is with me.”**

Today we look back at the context of his statement. He has been explaining to them his impending **death**...and therefore his soon-coming **absence**. *“In a little while you will see me no more...because I am going to the Father”* (v. 17).

And he explains that because of his **death**, and then his **absence**, they will experience deep grief: *“Very truly I tell you, you will weep and mourn while the world rejoices.”* But he then promises that great relief will follow: *“You will grieve, but your grief will turn to joy.”* Joy will come because *“I will see you again”* (v. 22)!

So a rollercoaster of emotions is headed their way. Deep grief. Then great relief.

*“Now is your time of grief, but I will see you again and you will rejoice, and no one will take away your joy.”* (v. 22).

Please pay close attention to what he says **next** about how they can get through **this painful interval** — between his death, and absence, and their grief — and his upcoming return and the joyful reunion they’ll enjoy. I think this is astounding...and it can help you and I when we go through grief and loss! He tells them:

<sup>23</sup> *“In that day you will no longer ask ME anything. Very truly I tell you, MY FATHER will give you whatever you ask IN MY NAME. <sup>24</sup> Until now you have not asked for anything IN MY NAME. Ask and you will receive, and your joy will be complete.*

<sup>26</sup> *“In that day YOU will ask IN MY NAME. I am not saying that I will ask the Father on your behalf. <sup>27</sup> No, THE FATHER HIMSELF LOVES YOU because you have loved me and have believed that I came from God.”*

He says: HERE is the way you will get through your grief and loss. It’s true: **I** will no longer be present for you to ask me for help. But the one **I** turn to for help, **“MY ABBA FATHER”** — **HE** *“will give you whatever you ask IN MY NAME”* (vv. 23-24)!

ASTOUNDING! No longer will they need **Jesus** to mediate their prayers to his Father! He is now giving them **direct access** to the same resource **he** has always leaned on: **the loving care and attention of his Abba! His Father is now THEIR FATHER!** **Or today you and I might say it like this: His Father is now OUR FATHER!**

In case they (or we) miss his point, he then spells it out again for them (and us): *“In that day YOU will ask IN MY NAME. I am not saying that I will ask the Father on your behalf. <sup>27</sup> No, THE FATHER HIMSELF LOVES YOU... (vv. 26-27)!”*

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*Gracious Father, we thank you today for your “one and only Son” — who by his death gave us access to YOU. We know that gracious Spanish expression of hospitality: “Mi casa, su casa.” (“My house is your house.”) Jesus tells us that in John 14:2-3! But here Jesus tells us something just as extraordinary: “Mi Padre es tu Padre!” “MY Abba Father is YOUR Abba Father!” “THE FATHER HIMSELF LOVES YOU!”*

And so Father, **OUR FATHER** — we come! And we ask! **ABBA**, hear our prayers!

Pastor Doug